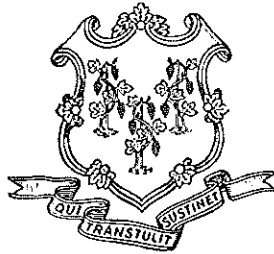


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March 11, 2015  
LOB 2C 11:30 AM

In **SUPPORT** of Raised Senate Bill 1054  
An Act Concerning Students with Dyslexia

Chairwoman Slossberg, Chairman Fleischmann, and distinguished members of the Education Committee, thank you for hearing SB 1054. I am here to testify in **support** of **Senate Bill 1054, An Act Concerning Students with Dyslexia**.

Dyslexia is an invisible problem, yet it is the most common learning disability among our state's students. In fact, one out of five people may have dyslexia. As many of you know, dyslexia is a neurological learning disability that impedes a person's ability to read, write, and spell. Students with dyslexia face numerous challenges, including difficulties with word recognition, reading fluency, spelling and writing skills. However, as research has shown, this learning disability affects every student differently. For example, students who have less severe symptoms early in their education may be passed through the education system until they experience much greater difficulties later in their education when the issue is more difficult to address.

Despite these facts, Connecticut currently does not have a statutory definition of dyslexia. A statutory definition of dyslexia, along with trained staff from the State Department of Education, who would facilitate communication with parents, guardians, and local school boards, can and will lead to earlier interventions. I want to applaud the committee for incorporating these provisions in Section 1 of this bill.

Currently, early identification is not taking place in many of our school districts because teachers and administrators do not have the knowledge or resources to properly identify and assist students with dyslexia. Although these students are often extremely intelligent, they are often mislabeled as being disruptive or lazy in the classroom because their teachers are not prepared with the requisite knowledge or experience in detecting dyslexia. Again, I commend the committee for requiring a minimum number of credit hours as part of any teacher prep program so that our future teachers can be properly trained in detecting and providing evidence-based early intervention for students with dyslexia (see Sections 2 and 3 of the bill). When dyslexia is identified and addressed, learning can resume and students can grow to their complete intellectual potential. Without these key tools, our children will continue to go unidentified and simply pass through our school system.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 1054. And I look forward to working with the leadership and members of this committee on this bill's passage.